# MOJAVE-SOUTHERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 25, 2001 RED ROCK VISITORS CENTER

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Susan Selby Environment

Patrick Chicas Permitted Recreation Steve Mellington Public-At-Large

John Hiatt Wildlife

Jerry Helton Transportation and ROW

Colleen Beck Archaeology

Billie Gayle Young Wild Horses and Burros

Stanley Smith Academic
Mike Wickersham State Agency

Barbara Callihan Dispersed Recreation

**RAC** Members Absent:

Maurice Frank-Churchill Native American

Mark Ioli Mining
Marta Agee Ranching
William Mull Ranching
Vacant Elected Official

Bureau of Land Management (**BLM**) Representatives Present:

Mark Morse Field Manager, Las Vegas

Angie Lara Associate Field Manager, Las Vegas

Gene Kolkman Field Manager, Elv

Jo Simpson Chief, Office of Communications, Nevada State Office

Eric Luse Associate Field Manager, Ely

Mike Gates Rangeland Management Specialist, Tonopah Field Station

Phil Guerrero Public Affairs Officer, Las Vegas Field Office Debra Kolkman Public Affairs Specialist, Nevada State Office

Mike Dwyer
Roy Morris
SNPLMA Project Manager
SNPLMA Business Manager
Daniel Fodrini
SNPLMA Realty Specialist
Michelle Yapp
SNPLMA Staff Assistant

Craig MacKinnon Tonopah Field Station Manager

Bill Fisher Supv. Resource Specialist, Tonopah Field Station
Susan Howle Environmental Protection Specialist, Ely Field Office

Paul Myers Economist, Nevada State Office

## **Public Attendees:**

Alan Levinson Former RAC member - permitted recreation

Gina Myers Round Mountain Gold (taking notes for Mark Ioli) Larry Barngrover Nevada Division of Wildlife, Regional Supervisor

Robert Maichle Former RAC member - recreation Jeremy Garcand Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Dave Terrell Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Acting chair, Susan Selby opened the meeting at 8:15 a.m. She welcomed all attendees.

# **Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Acquisition** - Mike Dwyer, SNPLMA Project Office Manager.

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) allows BLM and the other three Federal agencies to spend money it receives in five categories which are land acquisitions throughout Nevada; capital improvements on Federal facilities in southern Nevada; development of parks, trails and natural areas; development of multi-species habitat conservation plan easements; and recovery of the costs of implementation.

There is a process for public and local input, and coordination (see chart). The call for nominations went out to the public in late October. There was a forty-five day comment period. The public comment period ended December 1. The working group convened right after this and developed preliminary recommendations.

Preliminary recommendations are now out, and recommendations have been issued for public comment. Formal consultation and coordination, and a public comment period are going on until the end of February. The Executive Committee won't meet until April. Dwyer would like input from the RAC to take to the Executive Committee which consists of the BLM Nevada State Director, and regional directors from the National Park Service, the Forest Service (FS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This group considers preliminary recommendations, make their decisions and submits final recommendations to the Secretary of Interior.

When the working group meets and makes recommendations where land is concerned, they go by nine criteria, and each one has certain points assigned to it. At the meeting, members vote by a point system. The six members of the committee are given a ballot or ranking sheet (see handout). The working group asks the agencies to make a short presentation to the committee on each parcel of land nominated. They asked the agencies to address the criteria as presentations were made (e.g., for riparian values, please tell us the story in terms of riparian; is there running water on the site; is there perennial streams, etc.) Then those committee members added up all their scores according to their professional opinion and rank the nominations. They cannot change their mind once a property is ranked. However, the Executive Committee can change the ranking order of properties.

**Strategic Goals -** Selby asked Dwyer how he sees strategic goals fitting into the process in the future. Dwyer answered that "the quantitative ranking by the working group of strategic goals will have no impact on them because they are ranked strictly on their independent, individual natural resource values." Dwyer, sees in fact, that the Executive Committee will make very good use of this list. They will be able to make better decisions based on strategic goals and will be able to make a more appropriate approach.

Mellington asked Dwyer if the list was in priority order. Dwyer said he re-sorted all properties, so some have moved up. They are sorted by in-holdings, etc.

Beck commented that under strategic goals for land acquisitions and looking at the Act, it talks about preservation of natural scientific establishments, historical, cultural, watershed, wildlife, etc. There is nothing in the strategic goals regarding historical or cultural locations. Dwyer pointed out that if she looks at the ranking criteria, there are points assigned for historical, cultural and scientific values. It wasn't ignored in the process, but Beck does bring up a good point that it needs to be noted in the process. Beck agreed, especially with the increasing population in Clark County.

Dwyer pointed out to RAC members that there was a sheet in their handouts where the group did go back and took a look at what they did in Round 1.

Mellington asked if strategic goals shouldn't correspond to ranking factors. Dwyer answered that the working group was looking for that to happen at the Executive Committee level, but the way it is stated now, there is no connection.

Helton stated that he liked the way the group has set it up, they are evaluating the value of the resource.

Selby asked the other members what their opinions were of the strategic goals being set before starting the process or being towards the end of the process. Hiatt commented that a strategic goal has to be number one. If you put the goal on the screen the whole time, then you can ask the question, "Does this fit in with the strategic goal?" after you look at every property. Callihan stated she agreed with Hiatt. The goals have to be number one.

What Dwyer believes he hears the RAC advising is that as the Executive Committee embraces these as common strategic goals for land acquisitions. In the next round when we ask for nominations, we should ask the agencies or folks nominating lands to identify which categories these fit into. This might give us some assessment into the significance in relation to these goals. Hiatt suggested that for purposes of simplification and for communication with the public involved in this whole process there be one sentence that sums it all up (e.g., this would be for the protection of threatened/valuable resources that are at risk and everything else that falls into that category).

Mellington asked Dwyer if they have ranking criteria and if points are assigned on land acquisitions. Dwyer answered yes. Mellington asked if they have ranking criteria on capital improvements too. Dwyer commented that there were criteria in the implementation agreement. Mellington asked if the group had the criteria in front of them each time they ranked the improvement. Dwyer answered yes. In fact, the capital improvements group arrived at strategic objectives based on the long list of criteria. Can RAC members get a list of criteria the working group used so they can understand what they should be looking at? Dwyer answered yes.

Smith asked if at the start of the process, was there any decision made on how much money would go into these categories. Dwyer answered that the recommended allocation dollars came at the very end. So everything had already been ranked. Smith asked if that was based on a culmination of requests because there is no comparison between categories. Dwyer answered yes. Hiatt commented that the only one was the 25 percent reserve for capital improvements. Dwyer stated that the group decided where they would draw the line at end of the ranking.

Chicas asked if any projects are left from the year before. Helton explained that the asterisked items were proposed in Round 1.

Dwyer has a flip chart of priorities that was generated from the capital improvements group. He typed up flip chart, but it is on his computer and he will share with the RAC.

Dwyer stated that the next thing on the agenda is how the RAC can involve themselves and how they can make suggestions to improve the process.

Selby stated that the next side of this is how is the RAC going to provide input on these projects. Selby suggested four general ways in which the RAC might actually go about providing input. She read the list aloud and asked other members for their thoughts.

1. The RAC uses the established agency criteria. In other words, all we do is take the same criteria that were used by the other agencies and committees to prioritize projects. We assign points or however we deem. She asked members if they all understood what was meant by "criteria." This is information you have about each project that helps you make

a decision when you have to choose between projects. You all have a page that Dwyer handed this morning titled, "Ranking Criteria." These are the criteria they used for land acquisitions. If the RAC decides it wants to do what the other agencies did, the RAC could do this by taking the same criteria and each member going through and assigning their own points to them.

- 2. We could sit down today and try to develop our own criteria. We could list all the things we want to know about a project or a bunch of projects (e.g., cost of each project). She believes the RAC criteria would be pretty similar to what the agencies have already come up with.
- 3. We could be educated on what the current criteria are, then discuss what we believe additional criteria might be. Each individual would think about all the criteria discussed and decide in his/her own mind what is important when we make decisions on projects. Then each individual would rank projects as he/she wishes, based on the criteria that each individual thinks is important.
- 4. We could try to decide among the RAC which projects we like best a consensus ranking.
- 5. They could go with Hiatt's suggestion from the last meeting.

Young commented that in representing the public, we might have information about certain individual projects that we might want to make known to everyone. Dwyer stated that was a very good comment, because another function this RAC provides is the role of the public, and providing a comment period for other members of the public. So anyone can use this forum to come forward and say I really have a problem with this one or I really like this one, or here is a new one. This helps the agencies show that they have provided for and received public comment.

Wickersham asked if Clark County was held to some criteria for the monies they asked for the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). Do you have a clear understanding of their validation process for what they asked for? Were you able to follow and track and agree to what they asked for? He would be interested in how much overhead they really had.

Mellington asked Dwyer what he wanted from the RAC? Dwyer answered that he would like to be able to say to the Executive Committee, I have presented our recommendation in a public forum and given the RAC and any member of the public the opportunity to comment. Mellington stated that it would be hard for him to make any comment about the list because he doesn't fully understand any of the projects. Seems like, with the land acquisitions, you have strategic goals, you have criteria, you rank them, and you have points. He can understand that part, but then the other three categories seem to fall apart. Dwyer responded that they have written that down, and they think it is an excellent recommendation. They will do that in the future.

Morse commented that in talking with State Director Abbey, what he would like to see from the process is exactly what Dwyer said. That we are in every shape and form going out there and trying to get public input into this process. With the RAC, what he sees, is that you do represent an area of interest groups and you do have your own interests. State Director Abbey is looking for projects to flow through (projects that may not have gotten up on the board). Abbey is looking not just at the working end of it, but if you want a chance to talk with him, he will make himself available to you to listen to your concerns. They don't have a definite process they want the RAC to follow, they just need their help and suggestions.

Selby asked Young if she wants to see all the detailed information that came in with all the projects early in the process or does she want to see only the list of projects that have made the minimum cut. Young answered that she wants to see all the detailed information for the projects so she knows everything is being considered in the ranking, whether that is safety, or whatever. Lara commented that the best time to affect the ranking process is for the RAC to have input into the strategic goal process, because when the group is ranking projects, they have already looked through information and they don't discuss each project by specific details. They look at the bigger picture.

Hiatt commented that, to really involve the RAC and the public in the process of selecting or commenting on those projects early in the process, the RAC almost needs to have these things posted on a web site before the cutoff date. Then anytime during the process, the public has an opportunity to comment if they see some flags or problems in the process.

Smith commented that if they could get key information on the web site without having to call people or drive somewhere to get information, that would be a big help. Maybe they need to think about what key kinds of information exchange they want and how can it be made available to them?

Dwyer commented that they actually have in their strategic plan for this year to do a web site, and to hire a person to handle all of this along with the geographic information system (GIS). It should happen by the end of the year.

Selby asked if they were talking about having the notebooks on the web. Dwyer answered yes. Smith commented that they need to be able to get key stuff off the web. Young asked if they could be informed when it is available on the web. Dwyer answered they would receive notification via email or a note in the mail.

Dwyer suggested that the RAC take look at the criteria that is in the implementation agreement, make comments on the information for the four categories, and if you don't find it, make recommendations on your own for future rounds. Implementation agreement has criteria for all categories except MSHCP. He had handed out a copy of the implementation agreement at October RAC meeting.

Guerrero commented that there is a working copy of the implementation agreement on the SNPLMA web page, but the implementation agreement is updated every couple of months. Dwyer suggested that now would be the time for the RAC to take a look at the agreement, and submit their comments. Dwyer won't circulate the agreement for signature until he hears from the RAC.

After some discussion, RAC members agreed that they could make some recommendations today, which would include:

- 1. Provide and/or develop overall strategic goals that are consistent with the Act for each of the four categories. If goals are already developed, provide to RAC at next meeting for input.
- 2. Land acquisitions Strategic goals have already been developed.
- 3. Capital improvements There are none in writing, but Dwyer has these on a spreadsheet on his computer and he will share with the RAC.
- 4. Parks and trails Strategic goals have not been developed.
- 5. MSHCP Strategic goals have not been developed.

Young suggested that on strategic goals for land acquisitions the RAC should make a recommendation that the working group show cultural/historic or scientific values (from SNPLMA). In its recommendations, the RAC is suggesting the group follow the stated purposes SNPLMA, which includes cultural resources and everything else that the projects are supposed to be consistent with. The next level of more detail is the strategic goals. Should the strategic goals re-state what SNPLMA says? Beck believes they should because the current goals omit some of the SNPLMA language about protecting resources.

Roy Morris told the RAC that if they wanted to word how they wanted the goals to read, he would put it in Implementation Agreement tomorrow. Decide how you want to word it, and he will do it.

Selby asked the other members if there were any other recommendations. Do we want to make recommendations to make sure they develop criteria for all four categories? Members said yes. She could go ahead and craft some language for the RAC and let them look at it.

Hiatt stated that next time he would also like to see some sort of ranking of things under capital improvements to see how they dealt with the goals and criteria. Selby answered that Dwyer already said he will get that information to the RAC at the next meeting. Smith stated that regardless of the cost, each project should go through the same process and scrutiny. Selby asked if they had a quorum. D. Kolkman stated they did not in Category 1.

Selby temporarily adjourned the meeting for a break at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

Selby stated that the RAC could go ahead and vote on chair and vice-chair, even though they don't have a quorum. Helton had reminded Selby that in the past, they stated in the minutes that the officers were selected by the majority present, rather than the actual pods present.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

### Chair

Helton nominated Selby as Chair, Young seconded the motion. No other nominations were submitted. All members present voted for Selby as Chair.

## Vice-Chair

Selby nominated Mellington; Beck seconded the motion. Hiatt nominated Helton, Young seconded. Mellington declined nomination. All RAC members present voted for Helton as Vice-Chair.

**RAC CHARTER AND PODS** - Smith wanted to know what the flexibility is in regards to individual RACs changing their charter. Morse believes they are open to looking at this issue. With regards to re-writing the charter and pod information, it is staff's recommendation that they should wait until the new Secretary has been confirmed and has been in the position for a while.

Morse suggested that members look at the charter, as they may see other things they want to change. One change suggested to him is to make the RAC boundary the same as the field office boundaries and not have the boundary go up into Battle Mountain or Ely. It might be more efficient for the RAC to deal with just Clark-Nye County issues, or does RAC feel like what they have right now is what they want to deal with. Please take a look at this while looking at the Charter.

Hiatt stated that the influence of the urban population in Clark County extends far beyond the county boundary. Issues which originate here extend well north of the Clark County line. He would argue that we wouldn't be doing ourselves or BLM a great favor to just restrict activities of this RAC to the Clark County district.

Helton commented that he has gotten a tremendous amount of benefit from the input from other members such as Agee and Flake (when he was on RAC), and folks from Tonopah area and all have certainly helped him understand how the dynamics of Las Vegas/Clark County is affecting the border counties.

Helton said that the initial task of this RAC was grazing. In trying to put a group of people together to develop guidelines for grazing, if the boundary had been drawn closer to Las Vegas, our input from the grazing community would have been severely limited. In the dynamics of Las Vegas and Clark County, it won't be too many more years before the development industry will overlap our surrounding boundaries. For example, Ely will be selling 6,000 acres of land at the end of this year in Mesquite and it is going to go right up to Clark County. He believes that the Clark County development community will be looking hard at that. In the short future, we will be back looking at overlapping boundaries as far as growth issues.

Selby asked if any of the RAC members present wanted to change the boundary of the RAC? Most members commented that they liked the current boundaries. Beck doesn't have a decision yet. Morse would like RAC members to think about it, so they can discuss it when they work on re-writing the Charter.

Selby adjourned the meeting for lunch at 12:15 p.m. Meeting re-conveyed at 1:00 p.m.

**EASTERN NEVADA RESTORATION PROJECT:** Susan Howle, Environmental Protection Specialist, and Gene Kolkman, Field Manager, Ely Field Office

Howle started off by saying this project is just a small part of the overall project called the Great Basin Restoration Project (GBRI). The project focus for restoration is to restore and maintain the biological and ecological conditions of the Great Basin landscape in eastern Nevada through collaborative efforts. (Hard copy of presentation attached.)

Dave Terrell, Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation - As he works for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), one of his values has also been to help bring effective changes as far as resources, to find a common ground. What is exciting for RMEF is the nature of this project, and the notion that we would implement a true community-based process to try to affect natural resource management and have an impact on that. RMEF is very committed to this project, and committed to rolling up their sleeves and helping to partner with others in this effort. They are excited to be part of the process and they say, "Let the journey begin."

Selby asked Kolkman what he would like the RAC to consider. Kolkman answered that he would like the RAC to consider doing a couple of things. The first one would be to consider developing standards that they could use, that could be one of the inputs (e.g, this issue on pinyon-juniper and sage brush conflicts) this might best be reflected between RMEF and the Mule Deer Foundation. When we were meeting earlier, we were talking about fire suppression. That is great for elk, cows and horses because it will convert pinyon and juniper and knock it back 50 or 60 years. However, the Mule Deer Foundation pointed out that if BLM relies solely on fire, that doesn't address mule deer habitat. Their opinion is that trees need to be removed right now. Therein comes the controversy of should we or shouldn't we. One day we need to bring in some specialists to talk about what the country will look like 100 years from now if we do nothing. Many predict we are condemning these hills to cheatgrass, noxious weeds, etc., and we won't be able to support wildlife in 100 years. The second item would be public involvement, because we won't build consensus and long-term success if we don't involve the public and have their support.

Hiatt commented that he could not emphasize enough to go slowly. A lot of people need to be involved, and there needs to be a lot of scientific involvement up front. There needs to be a real realization on the part of everybody involved that this isn't all one kind of country. There are going to be lots of individual site procedures. Terrell agreed. He said from RMEF's perspective, they asked the same questions early on. If they were going to have public input, they needed a good system in place. This is a very large, ambitious undertaking.

Kolkman commented that he could put a perspective on this. This summer, we had one 8,000-acre fire on the Cherry Range. We spent \$2.2 million fighting and managing it, and another \$800,000 trying to rehab the area. If he had \$3 million to spend on 8,000 acres, the landscape would look a whole lot better because we wouldn't have to fight erosion and other issues. Landscapes are always changing—cheatgrass is expanding, noxious weeds are moving, and fires are burning valuable resources.

Selby asked Kolkman since they knew the cost of suppression and rehab, had they roughed out some figures to figure out a range to be proactive and to have it treated first. Kolkman responded that it would probably cost about \$200-300 per acre. It all depends on the cost of things such as native seed. In a cool fire in the fall, it costs much less than fighting a hot fire in the summer.

Young asked Kolkman if they were able to direct donated funds. Kolkman answered yes, working through the project office. Terrell commented that, because his organization has developed strong relationships in doing these types of projects, RMEF will act as the base. They have invested about \$6.5 million in habitat improvement projects over the last 10 years in eastern Nevada.

Smith asked how good the data base is for historical plant communities, and elk and deer in that region for last 100 years. Is the consensus now that these populations are way down? Wickersham answered that the mule deer population is down, compared to 20 years ago. The long-term trend is that it will continue to go down as long as lands convert to – in this case -- pinyon-juniper. On the other hand, pronghorn antelope populations are up significantly because of actions by BLM and Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW). Basically, there are too many factors at work – environmental and human – to come to any sort of conclusion. If we don't do something as far as invasive species in the sage brush steppe type, sage grouse are going to continue to decline significantly.

Helton commented that the land we are talking about is federal land and all this is not natural. We have done certain things thinking it would help the land and found out later that it made things worse. It appears some of the things we are doing now are to reverse those procedures.

Smith commented that there could have been climatic changes that have prompted trees to move down the slope. But chances are most of the damage has been done by humans. Fire suppression was a huge part because that steppe probably burnt periodically and then those trees couldn't get established. That is historical, and we can't go back and change that now. The closed canopy pinyon-junipers have very little wildlife habitat and low bio-diversity and they are not very productive lands from that perspective.

Barngrover believes that the importance of what is being proposed is that this is an adaptive management process and they don't even claim that everything that will be done initially will be the absolute, proper thing to do. But they will take that experience and modify the process until they get it right.

**OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) MANAGEMENT** - Gene Kolkman, Field Manager, Ely Field Office. Kolkman stated they have OHV issues in White Pine County and in the district. He started talking with county commissioners and the four-wheel groups. Then he went back to the Tri-County, which consists of Lincoln, Nye and White Pine County Commissioners. He made the argument that this is reaching emergency proportions. We need to limit OHV use to existing roads and trails except for extreme circumstances. Nye County Commissioner Dick Carver suggested that all three counties work up an ordinance. The Northeastern Great Basin RAC has agreed to take on the task on how to approach OHV management and the issue of closing roads or not closing roads. He would like to ask that this RAC work with the other Nevada RACs to develop guidelines.

Chicas stated that the inventory process needs to be clearly understood. BLM has a bad history with this. His constituents feel they have been abused throughout history. Kolkman commented that the real issue is to try to get an ethic in place. Peer pressure works much better than a ranger. He would like to get an aerial survey to get a good idea of where roads are or used to be. If we do this as a partnership, it will have more impact than if the government forms regulations and others are out there waiting to see what they have to adhere to. We need to make it more of a community effort.

Helton commented on noxious weeds, and how significant a problem it is in the state. We need to educate the public. We need to produce public service announcements (PSAs), and get with the TV stations to air these nationwide. Morse suggested they could use Outside Las Vegas to be the ones to go to the TV stations and get them to air educational PSAs.

Kolkman commented that when he went to a grazing board meeting and they were arguing about 4-wheelers, he told them it was not a BLM issue, this is a public issue. We need to start self-policing, and start talking about this issue. When BLM and the FS came out with a draft proposal for OHV management last year, their Headquarters office heard overwhelmingly that it should be locally based. So he is making it local and trying to get these people to help come up with solutions to solve the problem. Chicas suggested that the agencies need to work hand in hand to help the public solve the problems.

Hiatt commented that the group that can do the most here are the manufacturers, who at the present time are showing ads of guys plowing through streams and what not. Manufacturers need to understand that they need to foster responsible use because it is in their best interest.

Chicas pointed out that he wanted to be very clear that the off-road community doesn't want to drive on graded roads. The reason people drive off of roads is because there is an aspect of challenge to it. Kolkman stated that BLM is re-evaluating their maintenance program. He said it all comes back to the fundamental ethic of staying on existing roads and trails and should be embraced by everyone.

Young asked Kolkman what exactly does he want from the RAC. Kolkman answered that he

would like to know if they would be willing to work with the Northeastern RAC and develop a set of guidelines to deal with these very issues we are talking about (e.g., how should we involve the public, how should we go about closing areas we need to close, relocating roads, etc.) and see if we can't get some guidelines out of the RAC to guide our decision-making in the future.

Kolkman thanked RAC for wanting to be involved. He will talk to Sierra Front-Northwestern RAC tomorrow. Our leader in the Northeastern RAC is John Muller. He is President of the White Pine 4-wheelers, and he is the one to contact.

Chicas asked Kolkman what his time frame was for completing the inventory. Kolkman answered that he doesn't see completion of an inventory in the near future. He is not sure how the County Commission process works. His view is that first step ought to be to get an ethic across by educating the children in schools. We need to let communities know that it is important to stay on existing roads and trails. Then if there is an area that gets habitual use, an emergency closure would be necessary. He would close it and then have a team figure out how to open it again.

Helton suggested that Clark County could start putting up signs along the highway to inform people where they can go to unload their ATVs. The more education and the more you can get the word out, the more people will be informed.

Hiatt asked Kolkman what BLM's obligation is with regard to water issues and issuing permits and trades. We have the driest state in the nation and we are essentially exporting our water via power plants, especially when we are authorizing a power plant to be built and then sending the power to California. Kolkman believes clearly that where we are authorizing an action that could cause a significant impact to an aquifer, that BLM is obligated to identify those impacts. Where those impacts would affect permitting, we have a responsibility to make the decision to permit it or not. Then you get into other land uses where BLM is disposing of lands for private use and we have state agencies that administer the water rights. In these instances, BLM doesn't have as much of a direct responsibility. We have an obligation to disclose it to the public. Ultimately that issue rests with the state. There is no difference between selling 3,000 acres and developing 500,000 homes or issuing permits for power plants that are air-cooled to send power to California. Hiatt would like to see impacts addressed in a NEPA document. Kolkman said that is a good point, as the NEPA document they have been working on has not addressed impacts on land exchanges and on surrounding areas. He will get back to the RAC on that issue.

Helton commented that if the use of ground water affects the ground water table, and you are relying on the State to take care of that, then a chain of events will take place that BLM could have addressed initially.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR AUGUST AND OCTOBER -** A motion was made and seconded to approve the RAC minutes for August. Young abstained since she was not at the meeting. Motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the October RAC minutes as amended. Callihan abstained since she was not at the meeting. Motion carried.

The draft letter to State Director Abbey concerning the RACs recommendations for goals for the categories for the SNPLMA working group will be finalized and a copy will be sent to Dwyer (see attached letter).

There being no further agenda items, Selby adjourned the meeting at 3:32 p.m.

# MOJAVE-SOUTHERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 26, 2001 RED ROCK VISITORS CENTER

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Susan Selby Environment

Patrick Chicas Permitted Recreation Steve Mellington Public-At-Large

John Hiatt Wildlife

Jerry Helton Transportation and ROW

Colleen Beck Archaeology

Billie Gayle Young Wild Horses and Burros

Mike Wickersham State Agency

Barbara Callihan Dispersed Recreation

**RAC** Members Absent:

Maurice Frank-Churchill Native American

Mark Ioli Mining
Marta Agee Ranching
William Mull Ranching
Stanley Smith Academic
Vacant Elected Official

Bureau of Land Management (**BLM**) Representatives Present:

Mark Morse Field Manager, Las Vegas

Angie Lara Associate Field Manager, Las Vegas

Jo Simpson Chief, Office of Communications, Nevada State Office

Eric Luse Associate Field Manager, Ely

Mike Gates Rangeland Management Specialist, Tonopah Field Station

Phil Guerrero Public Affairs Officer, Las Vegas Field Office Debra Kolkman Public Affairs Specialist, Nevada State Office

Craig MacKinnon Tonopah Field Station Manager

Bill Fisher Supv. Resource Specialist, Tonopah Field Station

Paul Myers Economist, Nevada State Office

**Public Attendees:** 

Alan Levinson Former RAC member - Permitted Recreation
Gina Myers Round Mountain Gold (taking notes for Mark Ioli)

Robert Maichle Former RAC member - Recreation Jeremy Garcand Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Jean Rice Representative from Congressman Gibbon's Office

Meeting was called to order by Selby at 8:05 a.m.

### FIELD MANAGERS' UPDATES

**ELY FIELD OFFICE** - Eric Luse, Associate Field Manager (see handout).

**Lincoln County Lands Act** - Gene Drais, from the Ely Field Office is the project manager. The scoping letter should be sent out the week of January 29 to the public. The BLM is trying to identify public issues and concerns that need to be addressed in preparation of an environmental assessment. There will be a thirty-day comment period once the scoping letter is sent out.

There are a couple of other things the Ely Field Office is doing with Lincoln County and the City of Mesquite: (1) trying to figure out qualified bidder criteria (e.g.,qualifications of bidders); and (2) working on a development agreement with the Lincoln County and the City of Mesquite for potential qualified bidders. The sale will be 6,300 acres around October 2001. *Ely will keep this RAC updated*.

Ely would like to post important information such as the Lincoln County Lands Act on their web page.

Mt Wilson Urban Interface Project - The Ely Field Office has received funding for 4,000 acres to be treated this year. They are looking at doing some landscape treatments in the Mt. Wilson area. They are working closely with Lincoln County and people in the Mt. Wilson area. The objective is to treat over 12,000 in 3 years. The Ely Field Office is preparing a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document right now. Information will be sent to the RAC within the next couple of months.

Hiatt asked Luse how BLM proposes to treat 4,000 acres. Luse answered that they are looking at the mechanical thinning of stands with a feller-buncher. Helton asked if the RAC saw the presentation he saw last fall on the feller-buncher at the BLM State Office. *Luse offered to present RAC with the video of the feller-buncher at March's meeting*.

Wild horses and burros - BLM Nevada still has some challenges this year. The Ely district will have limited gathers due to lack of funding from Headquarters. BLM actually did receive a budget increase of \$9 million this year. Senator Reid was very instrumental in getting this extra funding for BLM, but Nevada is not receiving any of the extra dollars. Selby asked if Nevada got the same percentage as last year. Luse commented that we received 14 percent last year, and this year we are receiving 12 percent.

Luse stated that the Ely Field Office will have two gathers this year to remove 1,100 animals. This still falls way too short in what they need to gather. Ely has 25 Herd Management Areas

(HMAs) in its District and 15 are significantly over their appropriate management level (AML) right now. This puts a lot of stress on the range and the animals.

Helton asked about the monetary distribution. Did Congress make the decision where the funds would go or did BLM make that decision? Morse answered that the BLM Headquarters redirected the funds. BLM Nevada put a Nevada strategy together, then the National office took this strategy and made it a national strategy.

Jean Rice (Representative of Congressman Gibbons) -What amount of money did Nevada get? Simpson said we could get that information and send it to her.

Hiatt asked if the market has been saturated since adoptions are down? Morse answered that we don't think so, but that's why we are doing a marketing study. We are not sure if we are doing the job the right way.

Selby suggested they draft a letter to the Secretary and let State Director Abbey review it.

Young asked if contraception methods are going to be used during some of the gathers. Are water projects being considered for areas where they have traditionally had water problems. Luse answered that he had no idea, but he will try to get this information to her.

Luse explained to the RAC that Nevada experienced really dry conditions this last year and Ely is trying to work with its operators. Last summer, it was Ely's priority to implement their drought policy. The area around Caliente is still dry and they are still monitoring the area. A lot of areas were closed last fall due to lack of forage or water.

Helton commented that the RAC has always taken the position that Nevada needs to get down to AMLs. BLM has spent considerable time and money trying to get to AML. Hiatt commented that he noticed that Nevada still doesn't have all their AMLs set for all herd management areas. It is really important to set AMLs for all areas when talking to people about more money. Helton commented that we would not get more funding unless we start spending it wisely. Unless Nevada delegation sees that we are spending our money appropriately, they will not sponsor our getting any more money.

Helton wants to thank the field office managers for giving a hard copy of their report at every meeting. He really appreciates these reports and usually goes back and reviews these handouts.

# **BATTLE MOUNTAIN FIELD OFFICE** - Craig McKinnon, Tonopah Assistant Field Manager

**Racing** - Races are becoming quite a workload. There are 1,700 miles of approved track in the Tonopah area. A lot of races are permitted in concert with Las Vegas. They have received a proposal for a 1,000 mile race in the desert. The Nevada 2000 race did bring up some of the

issues they have to deal with, but the field offices are doing a good job of coordinating these events. A couple of big races coming up are the Terrible Town 250 and the Tonopah 300, and the Las Vegas to Reno race. There are some touring events out of Death Valley. He understands that permitting policies for racers are changing too.

At the last meeting you folks mentioned that there were some litigation issues with the Nevada 2000 that had not been taken care of. Has this been taken care of since then? MacKinnon stated that it has not been taken care of in Elko, and in Ely they were supposed to sit down with the responsible person. McKinnon stated that they are getting quite concerned about road rehabilitation due to the dust factor.

Fisher asked Chicas if he would like to see existing costs that it takes to host a race (e.g., staff time, law enforcement, etc.). Chicas answered that would be great. Fisher will have his staff keep track of expenditures and time and then put those figures together. Chicas stated he would really like to be kept up to date on litigation issues.

**Barrick land exchange** - The Barrick land exchange has been completed. Tonopah just completed draft plan on the whole Rhyolite area. They received about 110 acres in the town of Rhyolite. BLM deeded over the facilities to Barrick. Barrick is thinking of donating the administrative buildings at the site (about 6 acres) to the National Park Service. The National Park Service is moving some of their administrative staff to Beatty.

MacKinnon stated he would like to get with Beck about cultural clearances.

McKinnon commented that BLM has asked for \$15,000 to do community-based partnership training in Beatty. Right now, they have more interest from Federal agencies such as the National Park Service than they do the community.

**Mine closure** - Barrick Bullfrog did an outstanding job on their mine closure program. He would like to get the RAC back to Beatty to take them on a tour. Barrick has fenced 27 abandoned mine shafts and has asked MacKinnon to backfill 16 other shafts. BLM tiered off of the state plan and they are going to backfill 10 of them. Because a lot of people come to Rhyolite, they want the public to be safe.

Planning efforts – They have two big planning efforts going on, but MacKinnon doesn't need the RAC's involvement yet. They are doing a plan amendment on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). They are mostly petroglyph areas. Another one is the Lunar Crater Back County By-Way proposed by outside groups. BLM doesn't shut the area off, they just try to highlight it as a management area. They have 54 proposed ACECs. A Federal Register notice has been done for the initial survey. He wants to meet with Nye and Esmeralda counties first. Then he would like the RAC to look at criteria and see if it needs revised. There will be 17-20 ACECs that actually will go through the process. They will have to do a plan and

an environmental analysis. The real strength of an ACEC is the management plan with public involvement. If he doesn't have the ranger capability to patrol petroglyph areas and the ability to develop and manage the areas, he doesn't want to designate all areas. He is very adamant that there has to be resources to manage the designation.

Selby asked MacKinnon, if something is designated or going to be designated an ACEC, does the process determine what will be the use in the future, or does the designation mean that certain uses are precluded from the area. McKinnon answered that it means more of the second, because an ACEC is for the protection of some resource. Morse commented that typically in the plan you designate uses that are compatible with area.

Chicas asked if any ACECs are going to effect current racing routes. McKinnon answered that he is not sure, but the planning process will identify these areas if there are any.

Young commented that The Outside Las Vegas is involved in developing a site stewardship program that involves volunteers or users who would be trained and able to help with protecting sites.

Beck commented that MacKinnon's concern about an ACEC designation for cultural resources is well founded. She believes the most important step for cultural sites is to get the site recorded.

She would like to visit with Fisher later on a more efficient way to record these sites. Maichle commented that just a photograph would work well for a visual recordation.

MacKinnon wanted to mention to Beck that, when they do a cultural plan on Rhyolite, it is their plan to develop criteria for nomination in the National Register of Historic Places at the same time.

**Trespass town sites** - McKinnon explained that Esmeralda and Nye counties are looking to bond together on the issue of public lands within trespass town sites. A typical example is Ione or Gold Point. BLM would like to get rid of these two parcels of land. Tonopah has lands within it that are public lands. BLM has agreed to be the mediator and to supply a database and GIS map. Senator Reid's office is involved. They are going to propose that BLM convey these lands to the county. County Commissioners have agreed that once criteria are developed, they will go to towns to see if people want this. MacKinnon wants to visit with Kolkman to see if he wants to extend it to his district.

**Renewable resource issues** - They are looking at four allotments that have been vacated and possibly creating a temporary forage bank for cattle and/or wild horses and burros because of fire or drought. The Tonopah office will do an environmental assessment.

**Amargosa Toad** - Fisher said he meet with the Beatty town council, and they have formed a conservation committee to look at alleviate the listing of the area as an ACEC because of the toad. The council approved and Nye County Commissioners will vote on giving the committee \$10,000 for a series of trails (equine, bicycle) and habitat improvements for the toad along the river corridor.

**Yomba Trespass Issue** - Jerry Smith, Battle Mountain Field Office Manager, negotiated a settlement with the Yomba. State Director Abbey is having solicitors look at settlement. It is gradually making its way to the Attorney General's office. They are not sure how the new administration will view the settlement. One concern is that the agreement is tied to issuing a grazing permit in March, and that deadline is fast approaching.

**Timbisha celebration** - The Timbisha held a ceremony on January 21 in celebration of the transfer of 2,500 acres of public land at Scotty's Junction and 2,500 acres of public land at Lida Junction to the Tribe. BLM still has some work it needs to complete before the transfer.

**Wild horse and burro study** - MacKinnon wanted to let RAC know that SAIC did a study on wild horses inside the Nellis range about a year ago. This study is a gold mine of information, especially how they figured horses on rangelands. He believes we could apply standards across the board. The study is not widely distributed, but he would like to see the study copied and distributed.

Selby temporarily recessed meeting at 9:35 a.m. Meeting reconvened at 9:50 a.m.

**LAS VEGAS FIELD OFFICE** - Mark Morse, Las Vegas Field Manager **Ivanpah Airport Legislation** - He sat down with Randy Walker on the sale of 6,800 acres. One major concern about the sale of public land in the Las Vegas area is if there is enough water to serve all the development. The money that comes in from this acquisition will go towards lands in the Southern Mojave National Park, and they can also use it for cultural preservation. Morse is going to push that BLM get an aggressive plan for managing these sites for preservation, but they need to put together in the next twelve months. He estimates that \$18 to 20 million should come in from these sales.

BLM has two disposal areas. One is in Jean and one is in Primm. BLM has agreed to hold back on disposal of lands and to look at the possibility of doing a modified competitive sale, but the airport authority could match the winning bid if they want the land.

Morse stated that the county already needs another disposal area around Jean because they are anticipating a need for a residential area. When Las Vegas does a plan amendment to their Resource Management Plan (RMP), they will ask the public to give them information on possible disposal areas.

**SNPLMA Land Sales** - The Las Vegas Field Office staff does the groundwork for these sales. The next sale will be May 9 at the Clark County Courthouse. This will be the first time that BLM will put up a large section of land—about 1,750 acres in North Las Vegas. They would like to see a competitive bid on this sale. They are waiting on appraisal right now.

**Exchange** - Morse stated that the Las Vegas exchange has been completed which means the Calico Basin came into BLM ownership. BLM is actively working on phase 2 and there are some real concerns with getting the rest of it done. The acreage going out of BLM ownership is out by Lake Mead.

**Trespass Issue** - Morse stated that, as far as grazing issues, they do have one serious trespass situation. This is the Bundy trespass in Golden Butte. They are in the process of putting together a package for the U.S. Attorney of how they are going to handle the trespass.

**Outside Las Vegas** - Outside Las Vegas is a non-profit group that is going to try to facilitate land ethic and help the four agencies in accomplishing their goals. BLM has a tremendous dump site (of tires) that Outside Las Vegas is going to help clean up. There are 5 to 10 acres of old tires. Outside Las Vegas will also help facilitate how people view destruction of their public lands. Lara commented that this dump is near the town of Nelson.

Selby asked Morse what the boundaries are for Outside Las Vegas. Morse answered that initially they look at public lands within one hour from Las Vegas. They may go further but they won't go all over the state. Young suggested that the RAC invite Executive Director O'Neill to the next meeting to make a presentation.

**Oliver Ranch** - BLM would like to develop an environmental center at Oliver Ranch. BLM took \$100,000 to conduct a feasibility study.

**Nellis Plan** - Morse said that the Las Vegas office will be asking for an extension on the Nellis Air Force plan even though Congress mandated that it be done by October 1, 2001.

Wild horses and burros - Morse told members that the Las Vegas Field Office has conducted two emergency burro gathers. One was in the Red Rock HMA and one was in the Johnnie HMA. They were getting hit on the highway. They were trying to gather all the burros that were at least one-half mile from the highway. BLM wants to be more active in stopping people who are feeding the burros along the road. Unfortunately, several members have noticed burros being fed since the gather. The National Wild Horse and Burro Association has been extremely helpful with the gathering of these burros.

**Sunrise Landfill** - The Sunrise Landfill Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendment is being done now. They received a request from the county to pick up all those lands, and BLM has defined all those lands. The plan was not written to allow BLM to sell these lands, so that is why they are doing an amendment.

**Mesquite land sale** - Las Vegas needs to coordinate with Ely because they have about 2,000 acres in the Mesquite area they need to sell too. This land is not adjacent to the Ely land. Both sales are due to legislative acts and they will be by competitive bid.

**Shooting range** - Clark County believes it needs a competitive shooting range. BLM has been asked to provide a site. They have a map with about 6 sites to present to BLM to review for problems that could occur, and sites they cannot alleviate problems on. After BLM does this, they will visit with county officials and the Nevada delegation on the next step. They will need to pursue legislation like they did for the Nellis and Apex sites. BLM needs to lay out what it can and cannot do.

**Miscellaneous** - BLM received a big increase in fire funds, and as a consequence, the Las Vegas Field Office will build two new buildings (fire stations). One will be in Mesquite and one will be in the Calico Basin. Lara added that the FS will also be building new fire stations, so they will be working closely with them.

Lara told the RAC that the Las Vegas Field Office will be hiring an Air Quality Specialist who will serve all of Nevada. Hiatt asked if this person will look at the dust issues that affect Las Vegas that don't originate here. Morse answered that they are going to work with the county to resolve such issues. BLM needs to be part of the solution.

Hiatt commented that he read that the gravel pit near Jean has been finalized. It will be 2,000 acres in size. Morse is not aware of this, but he will check on it.

DISCUSSION OF TIMES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - Beck mentioned the issue of public input. We always need to schedule a public comment period but it doesn't necessarily have to be at end of meetings. We may want to the change time to the beginning of each topic issue, or like other RACs, state that the Chair can stop the meeting for public comment at any time. Hiatt responded that the public should be able to comment on topics as they are discussed, and at a proposed public comment period. Helton commented that the public is always welcome to comment, but there needs to be a published comment period. Beck said that there are other publics that don't understand that they can comment at any time. Hiatt commented that we can state in the agenda that the meeting is open to the public, and that we adhere to FACA guidelines.

**Miscellaneous** - Hiatt asked if he could make a brief comment. He receives realty actions in the mail certified. This costs BLM money, and it costs him time. He would rather receive this information through regular mail. Selby asked Morse if they had thought about a signature

waiver form. Morse answered that RAC members receive these realty actions as part of a Notice of Intent, which is part of the EIS process. The Federal regulations state this has to be sent via certified mail. **Morse will look into to see if they are over abusing.** 

Beck commented that she received some mail from the BLM, State Office that was sent to her old address. BLM needs to have an up-to-date comprehensive list. Helton also has received mail from BLM at an old address

Selby recessed the meeting for lunch at 11:45 .am. Meeting was reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

**U.S. FOREST SERVICE TO RAC AREA OF JURISDICTION** - -Tom Kuekes, U.S. Forest Service, Spring Mountain. He is here today because of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act passed in October 2000. This Act, as far as the FS, changes the formula for distribution to native counties (based on receipts collected) for timber sales, grazing permit fees, recreation site fees, electronic site fees, etc. In the past, 25 percent of the funds collected have been distributed back to the county. Because of fluctuations in programs, this has not been a steady source of income. This Act gives the ability to stabilize payments to counties (see handout). The payment from now on will be the average of the three-year high. The new Act provides some flexibility in that it allows for a small portion of the money collected to be put into a special fund. Title 2 projects are tied to Federal lands where the money was collected. Title 3 would allow counties to spend money towards specific projects such as search and rescue. This is all fairly complex.

The FS in Nevada is extremely interested in utilizing the BLM RACs. A letter went out to the RACs co-signed by State Director Abbey and Forest Supervisor Vaught. RAC members should have received a copy of this letter. Kuekes is here today to give his viewpoint on how the FS could utilize the RACs and to answer any questions or concerns. One question that has come up in the long-term discussion is what sort of time commitment is needed from the RAC. The FS realizes that RAC agendas are full and that additional agenda would not be very appealing. So, what they have discussed are items that would be of interest to both agencies. They would try to minimize the impact of FS by incorporating an hour or two during RAC meetings for the FS to present their information.

Beck commented that in the Act there is a statement that says, "A project may be proposed by a Resource Advisory Committee to the Secretary if it has been approved by a majority of members of the committee from each of the three categories." After some discussion among RAC members, Beck suggested that the RAC needed clarification on what the wording means, because it could be interpreted at least two different ways.

Mellington asked if it was possible to expand the size of the RAC to increase the size of each pod with the challenge of having a quorum at the meetings. Simpson answered that they could ask for a change in the charter to increase the size of the Pods.

Beck asked Kuekes if she was correct in her assumption that this Act only applies through 2006. Kuekes answered yes.

Maichle stated that the one thing the RAC is forgetting is that the counties still have the option to spend their money on roads and schools as they have in the past.

Beck asked if BLM is in agreement with the concept. Yes.

Callihan asked if this participation would go further than the initial Act. Would they be utilized in other areas or for other things? Kuekes answered that would be up to the RAC to decide how much they wanted to participate. The only statutory requirement is that they use RAC for this Act and it appears this will be fairly limited.

Young asked Kuekes if they could do this on a courtesy basis unless it becomes more than they can handle, he could go back to the FS and suggest they form their own RAC. A Motion was made by Mellington that the RAC make themselves available to help the FS out on the regulatory requirement of the ACT. Motion was seconded by Callihan. Motion carried.

TABLE MOUNTAIN WIND STUDY - Ann Morton, Project Manager. RAC members should have received a Notice of Realty Action. In that action, it explains what the BLM will be undertaking in wind energy as well as identifying other energy projects for the area. First map shows the areas of Sandy, Jean and Primm. (See map 1). This map depicts the area for the wind project, which was identified by a proponent that wants to move ahead on the wind project. They filed an application for a permit for an anemometer sites on the most southern portion in T25R58. They also identified an interest in the most northern portion of the project area. The BLM thought this might be a competitive bid area. After they visited with other BLM offices on how to go about doing this project, they decided an EIS would be necessary and that they would attempt to do a competitive right-of-way process to select the one proponent to move forward with their project somewhere in that wind study area. This process also required other companies to notify BLM of interest in the area for other energy projects.

BLM held public meetings the week of January 15 in Las Vegas, Sandy Valley and Good Springs to bring proposals to the public.

At the Las Vegas meeting, the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) had concerns about raptors (migratory bird flyways) and big horn sheep habitat. The Sandy Valley meeting was very vocal as their concerns are for taking water out of the basin. Reliant is trying to get a long-term water right from Vidler for their facility. Good Springs questions were mostly to M&N, a company who is the proponent for the wind energy project. There are also some mining claims near the proposed wind projects.

The competitive right-of-way is associated with the wind project only. BLM has asked for expressions of interest or for applicants to file rights-of-way for other energy-related projects in that area so they are out in the open. Selby clarified this statement by asking if other people are competing for that same wind project. Morton answered yes.

They also identified Ivanpah airport area on the map. This is based on legislation we have in place. As you can see from the map, it overlaps our utility corridors as well. BLM is trying to

meeting with the Department of Aviation. Issuing corridors is critical. Impacts on airport from corridor need to be addressed.

Morton explained the process. The BLM will ask parties that are interested in constructing a project to identify themselves. They will inform interested parties that they have to be at the table to bid and they must submit a bid deposit and a cost recovery fee, because the successful bidder will be totally responsible for full cost reimbursement of the entire process--from beginning to end. There will be an auction, and BLM will open sealed bids they have received. The BLM will then declare the qualified bidders, and they will move forward with oral bids with a preference right to move forward with their right-of-way proposal for a wind project study. The winning bidder will then have to file their formal right-of-way application, and they will have to identify their project and their ancillary facilities (e.g., roads, telephones, sub-stations, etc.) so they can then begin the EIS process. Beck asked Morton that by "preference" are you saying that if something happens in the EIS process that says this project cannot go, it doesn't go. Morton responded that there is no guarantee that this project will go forward. There will be no money refunded. The winning bidder funds the EIS. The rental will begin the day the right-of-way is issued, not the day their turbines start.

Selby asked Morton if BLM had any sort of policy as far as water-cooled plants. Morton answered no, because water and allocation is a state issue. They have temporary water rights from a landowner near Primm, but they will need a long-term plan.

Beck asked how many anemometers have been put in. Morton indicated that they have not put in any yet, but they will put in 11. Wind industry has had an interest in this since the early '90s. Clark County is in an area with an anemometer and there are other sources of literature that support this area for wind energy. Beck would recommend caution because once you disturb an area, the damage is done.

Beck commented that there was the Native American Indian issue. Morton indicated they would be coordinating with the Native Americans on this issue.

Wickersham added that this area is not only habitat for resident sheep, but there has been documented movement of big horn sheep. NDOW has not had to deal with this yet as an agency. Even though big horn sheep are adaptable, this corridor is still looked at as a primary movement corridor and as an exchange of genetic information north and south. Morton encourages all RAC members to document their concerns and send it to her. You can contact her at their web site: <a href="www.nv.blm.gov/vegas">www.nv.blm.gov/vegas</a>. This will take you to the general page of the Las Vegas web site, then there is a Table Mountain site. You can get a copy of all available information from this web page.

**INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCER'S PROJECT (IPPP)** - Jackie Gratton, Las Vegas Field Office. This is a proposal to construct a power plant on the Moapa Indian Reservation northwest of Mesquite (see map). The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) issued a Notice of Intent to conduct an EIS, and BLM called to ask to join in the process as a cooperating agency. None of these proposed projects are on public land. Only public land involved right now is a potential

exchange with Robert Lewis in the Moapa area. There is no commitment or nothing in writing from PG&E.

BLM's process would be the issuance of a right-of-way for power lines, water lines, gas lines, etc. Issues that have arisen specific to one of these pertain to water extraction, location, amount and air quality. BLM has not made a determination on what type of environmental documentation they will use.

Kolkman informed the RAC that one power plant might be built in Lincoln County in the Toquop Wash Exchange. This is a land exchange with the Carson City Field Office. BLM would acquire some land in the Pah Rah Range by Sparks. In return for that, Ely is disposing of a section in Toquop. The intended use for that would be a power plant and a natural gas line for the power plant. A feasibility report hasn't been done yet.

**Red Rock Canyon General Management Plan** - Gene Arnesen, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Las Vegas Field Office.

The plan has been sent to the printer. The protest period starts at the end of January and will go until the end of February.

The main reason for the plan was to manage emphasis areas, which are similar to recreational opportunities. It divides Red Rock into different zones. Each zone will have different types of activities and uses that are allowed in that zone. Zones would go from developed to primitive. Each area will have different types of facility levels and use.

Chicas commented that a lot of roads in the Red Rock WSAs have been used for decades. Arnesen stated that all roads will be closed except for ones that have been cherry-stemmed. Chicas commented that will be a big impact to his community because a lot of people go up there. Arnesen stated that when Congress finally makes a decision on that area, he doesn't know what will happen. Chicas commented that BLM is shutting off a lot of roads to motorized traffic that will be a big issue. BLM will have a horrible time enforcing this restriction. Beck agreed. Arnesen stated that they were welcome to send in a protest.

Selby asked if BLM has a contingency plan that says what happens if these lands are ever released from WSA status. Arnesen answered yes. The idea is to keep this plan flexible so if they do make some proposals in the future, it has to be consistent with the proposed zone.

Hiatt asked Arnesen what the BLM is doing today as far as AMLs, because it says in the area of Spring Mountain Range and 160 there will be 6 to 10 horses. Young responded that there are 5 horses around Blue Diamond, 3 are in Gypsum mine area and 6 horses traversing between the pasture and highway to eat and drink. Morse responded they are about where they want to be as far as AML. BLM looked at vegetation and the water situation.

**Rock climbing issues** - The main issues they are running into is the use of bolts in the WSAs. Upon completion of the General Management Plan (GMP), they are looking at doing a specific

climbing plan, which will tier into the GMP. A lot of issues they have kept general so BLM will have the flexibility to pursue other plans.

Three areas they are looking at in getting something going are: Oliver Ranch - where they will do a site-specific plan to consider an educational center, Red Springs – where a plan will be done to try to put back the area back to its natural state, and the scenic drive to conduct a mass transit feasibility study. He already has an interest from seven companies to do something with that. The feasibility study will be a third-party study.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** - Selby stated that it is now 3:30 p.m. and the Public Comment Period is open.

Maichle stated that one of his organizations has a problem, which is MacClannahan Springs. It is on public land. A rancher who has been a problem to Chicas and was given over to BLM as problem is now causing one of his clubs problems. This rancher has a dislike for motorcycles. He has fenced off 40 acres of land, and has put signs on public land that state, "Private - Keep Off." Then he drug a road around the edge of his fence so that people who want to continue up the road are not trashing an area around the fence. Maichle would like to see this as an agenda item at the March meeting and he would like to see something done. (The person's name is Cal Baird.) Selby asked Morse if anything was being done. Morse responded that a meeting was held last spring with all concerned parties. BLM was ready to issue a trespass, but they were asked by the county to hold off. The reason being because of RS2477, the MSHCP and the cooperation they were getting from Baird. But he does not know where it is right now. He will check on status. Morse believes Maichle's depiction is correct. Hiatt commented that it is not just motorcycles he is against.

Maichle was asked to draw up a petition on this issue. He will bring it to the next meeting.

Levinson-As far as horse trailer thing, if you are trying to get into a small location, the trailer determines where you can go in area. You should be able to back out of the area you went into if you made a mistake. The disbursement of horses is a much better idea than a major location, because most people won't spend all day riding. They want a one or two hour ride. They want to be able to get off somewhere along the way. Otherwise they will abuse area with too much use. Hunting above 4,500 feet in elevation has never been a problem. There is bird hunting in the lower elevations. Young commented that there have been a couple of horses that have been shot and the theory is maybe someone was bird hunting and had a blind site past the bird. The comment was made that birdshot only carries about 50 feet.

Selby stated that the public comment period was closed.

## **AGENDA ITEMS FOR MARCH:**

SNPLMA–Will be reviewing existing criteria and goals - ( $\frac{1}{2}$  day) Field updates - 2 hours 8100 Monitoring Program -  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour

Unfinished items during January meeting
Public comment period
Given agenda, do we want field trip? No.
Feller-Buncher Video-Ely Field Office
OHV Guidelines-Are we going to form a subcommittee?

Outside Las Vegas presentation End of protest period for Red Rock Canyon GMP

There being no further agenda items, Selby adjourned meeting at 4:05 p.m.

## APPROVED BY:

August 27, 2001 Susan Selby, Chairperson
Mojave-Southern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council

Minutes provided by Debra Kolkman, Office of Communications, BLM Nevada State Office

### Attachments:

- 1 Process Flow-Chart: Allocation of the Special Account (1 p)
- 2 Round 2 Preliminary Recommendation (15 pp)
- 3 Working Group Rankings of Properties Nominated for Acquisition (31 pp)
- 4 FY 2001 Strategic Goals for Land Acquisitions (5 pp)
- 5 Ranking Criteria Form (1 p)
- 6 SNPLMA Round 1 Expenditures of the Special Account (3 pp)
- 7 Letter to State Director Abbey on SNPLMA Recommendations (3 pp)
- 8 RAC Charter (6 pp)
- 9 Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project Slide Show (33 pp)
- 10 Approved Minutes of August and October RAC Meeting (28 pp; 13 pp)
- 11 Ely Field Manager's Update (3 p) Accomplishments for FY2000 (2 pp)
- 12 Battle Mountain Update (2 pp)
- 13 Dear County Commissioner Letter about Public Law 106-393 (3 pp)
- 14 Wind Study Area Map
- 15 IPPP Map
- 16 Red Rock Canyon GMP update (1 p)
- 17 Executive Summary Red Rock Canyon NCA GMP (4 pp)